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The Kite Runner

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Summary:

Amir and Baba are now on their way to Pakistan because they believe it is no longer safe for them to live in Kabul. They must sneak across borders unnoticed because it is illegal. The two of them board a truck with other people that are to take them to Pakistan. They undergo several roadblocks that hinder their progression. When the switch trucks that will take them to Pakistan, they find that they must take temporary refuge in the basement of a home before reaching Pakistan. Along the way, a friend of theirs, Kamal is killed by the harsh traveling conditions, which in turn leads to the suicide of Kamal’s father.

Baba and Amir are now living in Fremont, California, where they are having some minor and major problems. They face everyday hardships simply because the culture is much different than that of Pakistan. Baba buys Amir a car of his own, and he himself is working in a gas station. Amir is soon to graduate high school, upon which he desires to go to college to study writing. Baba sees the degree as useless and quickly declines.

In the days following, they purchase a van in which they make purchases at garage sales to turn profit at flea markets. One day in particular Baba introduces Amir to General Taheri and his daughter. Amir and the general’s daughter, Soraya, make eye contact and he cannot stop thinking about her. He asks Baba all about her, but he knows little. That night, he falls asleep thinking of her.

After a year of thinking of Soraya, Amir finally speaks to her. He really begins to have strong feelings for her, but her father will have none of it. Since they are not to be wed, General Taheri sees no point in their relationship. Soon after, Baba falls ill with lung cancer which he does not want to treat. After a few months, the cancer spreads to his brain. His days become limited, so Amir requests that Baba asks General Taheri for Amir and Soraya to be wed. Since the two are now engaged, they spend more and more time together. In the following, Amir and Soraya hold their wedding, at which Baba pays for almost all of it. The marriage is still new by the time Baba dies, but Amir realizes how great of a man he was.

Afterwards, Amir sees that Soraya’s family does not function well. Her father refuses to work, because he feels as though he is too good to work. Soraya’s mother is forbidden to sing, although she has a wonderful voice. General Taheri is now seen as a tyrant of a father and husband. Because of these reasons, the newlyweds purchase a home in San Francisco and begin to try and have a baby. Work is going well for Amir, but the fact that they cannot have a baby is unsettling.

The next summer, Amir receives a phone call from Rahim Khan in Pakistan. He asks Amir to come visit him in Pakistan. Amir has not seen or talked to Rahim since he and his father fled the country 20 years prior. Before his departure to Pakistan, Amir ponders his life in a park as he watches fathers and sons play catch, along with the kites flying high. He thinks about Soraya and their marriage and he thinks about Hassan.

Amir arrives in Peshawar, and is taken to Rahim’s apartment. On the drive to the apartment, Amir witnesses the drastic changes that have occurred in the towns. Upon arrival to Rahim’s home, Amir is welcomed in and they have tea. The two of them talk about Amir’s career, Baba, and Afghanistan’s current state. Soon after, Rahim announces that he is to die soon and has little time. Lastly, Rahim says that he must tell Amir something about Hassan that is new information.

Analysis:

In the novel, Amir is taken through many stages of his life. He travels and crosses borders, he graduates high school, he gets married, and get publishes his first book. During this section, Baba, Amir’s greatest motivator is dead and he is an adult living his own life now. He matures throughout each piece of information presented in the text. He now is no longer dependent upon Baba and must think for himself, as Baba had said he had taught him to do all along. In order for Amir to truly be an adult, he must let go of his childhood, which is why he is so inclined to going back to Afghanistan. He needs to have closure and tie up the loose end of his childhood in order to move on.

Application:

In this section, it’s profoundly evident that growing up is the theme that is spanning time and culture. Amir must grow up and mature as a man, which all people in some place, at some time or another do. Whether it’s going off to college after graduating high school, or it’s getting a first job at McDonalds, everyone matures thanks to the experiences that they are blessed with. Amir’s maturation is yet to be complete, for he has loose ends to tie, but then again, no one is ever truly mature. Since something new is learned every day, no one person can every fully mature. This characteristic of human nature that spans time and culture is that no human is ever done growing, maturing, and learning.